

North Carolina Uniform Crime Reporting Program

Historical Background

The North Carolina Uniform Crime Reporting Program is part of a voluntary national program of collecting crime counts initiated in 1930 by the Committee on Uniform Crime Records of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). That same year, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was authorized by the Congress of the United States to serve as the national clearinghouse for statistical information on crime. Since that time, data based on uniform classifications and procedures of reporting have been obtained by the FBI from the Nation's law enforcement agencies.

In an effort to provide as complete a picture of crime as possible on a national level, the Committee on Uniform Crime Records of the IACP chose to obtain data on offenses that became known to law enforcement, since greater numbers of these data were available than in any other category of reportable crime information. Realizing that not all crimes are reported, the Committee evaluated various offenses on the basis of their seriousness, frequency of occurrence, pervasiveness in all geographical areas of the country, and likelihood of being reported to law enforcement. Using those criteria, seven offenses were chosen to serve as an Index for gauging fluctuations in the overall volume and rate of crime. Known collectively as the Crime Index, these offenses include the violent crimes of murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault and the property crimes of burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. By congressional mandate, arson was added as the eighth Index offense in 1979.

During the early planning of the Program, it was recognized that the differences among criminal codes precluded a mere aggregation of state statistics to arrive at a national total. Further, because of the variance in punishment for the same offenses in different state codes, no distinction between felony and misdemeanor crimes was possible. To avoid these problems and provide nationwide uniformity in crime reporting, standardized offense definitions by which law enforcement agencies were to submit data, without regard for local statutes, were formulated. Reporting agencies are required to submit their data in accordance with the Uniform Crime Reporting definition of offenses as set forth in Section 2 of this publication.

Contributing agencies of the UCR Program are responsible for compiling and submitting their crime data in one of two means, either directly to the FBI or through state level UCR Programs such as the one established in North Carolina. State UCR Programs provide the advantages of

increased coverage of law enforcement agencies; the provision of more direct and frequent service to law enforcement agencies in assuring completeness and quality of information provided by them; and through coordination by the state data collection agency, more readily available information for use at the state level. With the development of a state UCR Program, the FBI ceases collection of data directly from individual law enforcement agencies within the state. Instead, completed information from these agencies is forwarded to the national Program through the state data collection agency (Division of Criminal Information in North Carolina).

Providing vital links between local law enforcement and the FBI in the conduct of the UCR Program are the Criminal Justice Information Systems Committees of the IACP and the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA). The IACP, as it has since the Program began, represents the thousands of police departments nationwide. The NSA encourages sheriffs throughout the country to participate fully in the Program. Both committees serve in advisory capacities concerning the UCR Program's operation.¹

¹*Crime in the United States - 1996*, United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, p. 1.

The Division of Criminal Information

The growing need for a central computerized network of criminal justice information for the state of North Carolina prompted an extensive survey by the Governor's Law and Order Committee in 1968. Following this committee's report, the General Assembly enacted legislation in 1969 creating the Police Information Network under the Department of Justice.

The Police Information Network (PIN) was given the authority under N.C.G.S. 114-10 to collect and correlate information regarding the administration of criminal laws; to maintain and control the access to such information that is required for the performance of criminal justice duties; and to make analysis and comparisons of this data in cooperation with local, state and national criminal justice agencies.

In 1985, the Police Information Network was made part of the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) by order of the Attorney General and merged with the SBI's Identification Section creating the Division of Criminal Information (DCI). It was felt that the Division of Criminal Information was an appropriate name since a major function of DCI would be to collect, store and disseminate criminal history and criminal statistical information.

In addition to maintaining criminal history record information and criminal statistical information, DCI also serves as a statewide telecommunications center. This central computer network operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, linking local, state and national criminal justice agencies with up to the minute information on crimes and criminals.

Users of the network not only have the ability to transmit or receive, within seconds, any law enforcement related message, but they also have access through the DCI to other law enforcement computers located throughout the state and nation. These computers include: the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS), the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), and the State Information Processing System (SIPS) for access to the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The high-speed communication links between these computer networks ensure the fast and accurate transmission of the latest data on criminal activity.

The National Crime Information Center (NCIC), maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Washington, D.C., is a nationwide computerized information system that serves all criminal justice agencies--local, state, and federal. NCIC contains information used to identify and locate wanted/missing persons and stolen/recovered property as entered by law enforcement agencies across the nation. NCIC also provides the access method to the national criminal history record information index known as the Interstate Identification Index (III).

The National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS), located in Phoenix, Arizona, is a communications system which allows for the exchange of messages from one state to another and to Canada. States may access and exchange information pertaining to driver's license, vehicle registration, boat registration, aircraft registration and tracking, criminal history records, sex offender registration and other law enforcement related messages.

The DCI and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) have implemented a computer to computer interface which provides all DCI users with the capability to access statewide Clerk of Court criminal records. Access to the AOC criminal records provides law enforcement agencies with immediate information pertaining to pending, disposed and unserved criminal warrants maintained by each county Clerk of Court.

The North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), a division of the Department of Transportation, provides access to North Carolina driver's license information, driver's history information and vehicle registration information. In cooperation with the Wildlife Resources Commission of the Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources, DCI also provides access to the state boat registration files.

The Division of Criminal Information also maintains files on State Wanted Person and Recovered Vehicles and is the central repository for NC Computerized Criminal History Records. Concealed Handgun Permits, Domestic Violence Orders and a registry of North Carolina Sex Offenders are also programs maintained and managed by DCI.

DCI is comprised of six sections: Administration, Crime Reporting and Field Services, Identification, Data Processing, Computer Operations, and Telecommunications.

The Administration Section, supervised by Judy Breeden, supports DCI's business needs by maintaining all accounting and financial functions. This section also performs such duties as the billing for user access and data processing services; the requisition of equipment and supplies; and inventory control of computer hardware and software. Other areas of responsibility include the installation of new terminals, computer interfaces, mobiles and live scan capabilities to the State Automated Fingerprint Identification System (SAFIS), the distribution of mail, and adoptions and amendments to the rules under the Administrative Procedure Act for the Division of Criminal Information Advisory Policy Board. The supervisor takes an active role in the Division's budget and the Department's biennium Performance/Program Budgeting.

The Crime Reporting and Field Services Section, supervised by Doug Kappler, is composed of three distinct but interrelated units: Crime Reporting, Field Services, and Quality Assurance. The Crime Reporting Unit is responsible for administering the crime reporting standard for North Carolina. This unit has the critical task of receiving, reviewing, and affecting entry into the data base of all crime data submitted. This process involves assurance that submitted data is in compliance with reporting standards and is accurate and complete.

The Field Services Unit provides specialized training programs to criminal justice agencies throughout the state. Training specialists travel the state to certify DCI terminal operators on the use of the network, to conduct

fingerprint training, and to assist local law enforcement agencies in compiling criminal statistics.

The Quality Assurance Unit performs field audits of law enforcement and criminal justice agencies to determine compliance with DCI and NCIC requirements regarding the use of the system as well as the dissemination of computerized criminal history. Part of the audit process is to insure that the information entered in to the DCI and NCIC networks is accurate and current.

The Identification Section, supervised by Stan Lewis, is responsible for collecting, classifying, searching, and storing criminal history record information, based upon positive fingerprint identification received from North Carolina criminal justice agencies. Once the arrest, court and custody information is verified by fingerprints, it is entered into DCI's computerized criminal history file (CCH) and is indexed in the FBI's CCH files, where it is accessible to all criminal justice and non-criminal justice agencies as authorized nationwide.

The Identification Section also automates criminal fingerprint card submissions into the Statewide Automated Fingerprint Identification System (SAFIS). The SAFIS is electronically linked to other law enforcement agencies throughout the North Carolina, allowing for the submission of criminal fingerprints from the point of fingerprinting and the subsequent search and immediate identification of those fingerprints. This electronic link also allows for the immediate search and identification of latent fingerprints from crime scenes.

The Data Processing Section, supervised by George Bakolia, is responsible for the design, development, maintenance and implementation of the division's sophisticated computer software applications. The operating environment consists of a large mainframe computer, acting as the enterprise server, surrounded by a distributed network of terminals, local area networks, distributed servers, and local computer systems. This environment allows for message switching between terminal users as well as direct access to NCIC and NLETS.

The Data Processing Section also provides projections and recommendations concerning future software and hardware needs. This section is constantly engaged in the research and development of new computer programs as well as in the enhancement of existing programs to ensure better capabilities for all users.

The Computer Operations Section, supervised by Aaron Burris, is responsible for maintaining and monitoring around the clock operation of the large scale com-

puter systems. These systems and all associated hardware are central to the data processing and telecommunications services provided by DCI. Other services provided by operations to the terminal user community include NCIC control terminal duties, NLETS control terminal duties, weather satellite operation and the handling of DMV drivers license record issues. Computer Operations at times acts as an SBI liaison after hours by contacting SBI personnel, initiating computerized record searches for SBI agents, and monitoring computer terminal traffic for other Bureau sections.

The Telecommunications Section, supervised by Carroll Willis, is responsible for all telecommunications connectivity within the network. This includes the design of the wide area router based TCP/IP network, fax, voice, and the implementation of new technologies that enhance communications connectivity within the agency. The section troubleshoots and coordinates with the appropriate entity for problem resolution for approximately 2,000 network users. The section is involved with the design, implementation and conversion of the proprietary legacy terminal network to a more open systems wide area network to support applications such as image, fingerprint and video transmissions with high speed connections.

Agencies which utilize the DCI system include Sheriff's Offices, Police Departments, the State Highway Patrol, the State Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Corrections, District Attorney's Offices, the Wildlife Enforcement Division, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Customs Agency, the U.S. Secret Service, the DMV, universities and other state and federal agencies.

The advisory body for DCI is the **Advisory Policy Board**. The board consists of not less than 13 members selected by the SBI Assistant Director for DCI for recommendation to the Director of the SBI with approval by the North Carolina Attorney General. Members shall serve for a term of three years.

Membership shall consist of four police chiefs, four sheriffs, one representative each from the State Highway Patrol, Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Correction, DMV (Enforcement), and the SBI Assistant Director for DCI.

The board meets as determined by the SBI Assistant Director for DCI. The purpose of the board is to advise and make recommendations to the SBI Assistant Director for DCI regarding philosophy, rule making, organization and operation of DCI.

Reporting Procedures

In the statewide Uniform Crime Reporting Program contributing law enforcement agencies are responsible for compiling their own crime reports and submitting them to the Division of Criminal Information (DCI). In an effort to maintain quality and uniformity in the data received, DCI Training Specialists provide training in crime reporting procedures. All contributors are also provided procedures for scoring, classifying and reporting criminal offenses and arrests.

A centralized record system is necessary to the sound operation of any law enforcement agency and is essential for crime reporting. Upon request DCI provides internal records forms and technical assistance available at no cost to any law enforcement agency. This provides for the establishment or modification of a basic records keeping system.

All crime reporting agencies report the number of offenses and associated crime data in the following crime categories: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson. This data, known as Part I Offenses, is taken from a record of all complaints of crime received by the law enforcement agency from victims, officers who discover infractions, or other sources.

Whenever complaints of crime are determined through an investigation to be unfounded or false, they are eliminated from an agency's count. The number of "actual offenses known" is reported to DCI regardless of whether anyone is arrested for the crime, stolen property is recovered, or prosecution is undertaken.

Another integral part of an agency's data is the total number of actual Part I offenses cleared. Crimes are "cleared" in one of two ways: (1) at least one person is arrested, charged, and turned over to the court for prosecution; or (2) by exceptional means when some element beyond law enforcement control precludes the arrest of an offender. Law enforcement agencies also report the number of Part I offenses clearances which involve only offenders under the age of 18; the value of property stolen and recovered in connection with the offenses; and detailed information pertaining to criminal homicide, rape and arson.

In addition to its primary collection of Part I offenses, the UCR Program solicits data on persons arrested for all crimes except traffic violations. The age, race and sex of arrestees are reported by crime category for both Part I

and Part II offenses. Part II offenses include all crimes not classified as Part I crimes. Various data on law enforcement officers killed or assaulted are also collected. The number of full-time and part-time sworn and civilian personnel are reported as of October 31, of each year.

Verification Procedures

An obvious concern in the collection of crime statistics is the validity and uniformity of the data received. With the voluntary submission of crime reports from over 450 jurisdictions, the problem of attaining uniformity is readily apparent. Crime data submitted to DCI is reviewed for compliance with reporting standards to ensure accuracy and completeness. Data reliability is a high priority and noted deviations or arithmetical adjustments are brought to the attention of the submitting agency by direct contact through a DCI Training Specialist. A great deal of the success of North Carolina's UCR Program has largely been due to the Training Specialist staff assigned to assist local agencies in record keeping practices and crime reporting procedures. Personal contact is invaluable to the accuracy and uniformity of UCR data received.

DCI has also developed an audit program to assess and document the accuracy and integrity of the crime data reported to the UCR program. Although DCI makes every effort through audits, editing procedures, training practices and correspondence to assure the validity of the data it receives, the statistics' accuracy depends primarily on the adherence of each contributor to the established standards of reporting.

Field Representation

For Uniform Crime Reporting purposes, DCI divides the state into nine districts. A DCI Training Specialist is assigned to each district to assist local agencies in many areas including record keeping practices and crime reporting procedures. The difficult and important task of maintaining close liaison is obvious when it is realized that services are provided to over 450 law enforcement agencies. Education of contributors to the program must be a constant operational requirement, if continued system adherence and valid statistics are to be expected. (See page 7 for Crime Reporting Districts.)

Incident-Based Reporting

The Division of Criminal Information (DCI) has developed an Incident-Based Reporting (IBR) Program similar to the one developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Incident-Based Reporting is a less restrictive and more expansive method of collecting crime data as opposed to the current Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Summary Program from which the statistics in this publication have been drawn.

With Incident-Based Reporting, DCI has overcome most of the limitations on crime analysis imposed by the UCR Summary Program simply by changing the method by which crime data is collected and compiled in this state. Conversion to Incident-Based Reporting has eliminated the monthly completion of time-consuming and often error-filled summary reports by the contributing agencies. Instead, agencies submit to DCI either a copy of their crime reports or they submit automated reports on a disk, tape, bulletin board, etc. From these reports the DCI extracts the data needed to classify and score all offenses, clearances, arrests and related data.

The advantages of such a reporting system are obvious: 1) less paperwork imposed upon participating agencies, 2) better overall uniformity and validity of crime data, and 3) a vastly enhanced crime data base for analysis purposes.

To fully appreciate the advantages of an enhanced data base, consider that statewide data for the following offenses is not available through the UCR Summary Program: 1) kidnaping; 2) white collar crime in its various forms; 3) the writing of worthless checks and other types of fraud; 4) spouse abuse; 5) child molestation, abuse and neglect; 6) non-support, and desertion or abandonment; 7) blackmail and extortion; 8) escape from custody and resisting arrest; 9) parole and probation violations; and 10) court related offenses such as perjury and failure to appear.

In addition to the above information, Incident-Based Reporting will provide the first valid analysis of the extent of juvenile crime and the criminal misuse of handguns in North Carolina, which would be invaluable in determining appropriate legislation for dealing with these problems. This program may provide limited examination of the modus operandi (M.O.) of crimes which could be studied and compared on a statewide basis.

Since Incident-Based Reporting began in 1980, DCI has converted over 430 agencies of the 460 reporting agencies to Incident-Based Reporting.

With increased automation of law enforcement records, DCI hopes statewide Incident-Based Reporting will become a reality in the near future. Section IX contains Incident-Based offenses for those agencies that have submitted twelve months of data for 1997. In addition, 1996 data will be included if the agency submitted twelve months of data for that year.

Hate Crime Reporting

In response to a growing concern about hate crimes, the President of the U.S. signed into law on April 23, 1990, the Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990. The Act required the U.S. Attorney General to establish guidelines and collect, as part of the UCR Program, data "about crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, including where appropriate the crimes of murder, forcible rape, aggravated assault, simple assault, intimidation, arson and destruction or vandalism of property."

The enactment of Federal legislation requiring the collection and publication of nationwide hate crime statistics prompted the N.C. General Assembly to pass hate crime legislation. This legislation allows for stiffer penalties for crimes committed solely on the basis of hate and provided funding for the N.C. Justice Academy to train law enforcement agencies in hate crime reporting. The N.C. Justice Academy began training law enforcement agencies during the fall of 1992, and in 1997, DCI began conducting hate crime training. This training continues statewide.

DCI also provides assistance to agencies in hate crime reporting, such as providing forms, reporting assistance and statistical analysis. DCI has modified its crime reporting forms to allow for the collection of hate crime. From 1992 through 1994, DCI received a limited number of hate crime reports. In 1995, fifty-nine agencies reported 52 hate crime incidents to DCI; in 1996, eighty-three agencies reported 34 hate crime incident; and in 1997, twenty-two agencies reported 42 hate crime incidents. While this limited participation is insufficient to generate meaningful trend analysis, these reports do offer perspectives on the general nature of hate crime occurrences. Hate crime incidents reported for 1997 are available in Section IV entitled Hate Crime Reporting.

Contributing Agencies and Population Coverage¹

There are currently an average of 474 law enforcement agencies throughout the State contributing directly to the North Carolina Uniform Crime Reporting Program. The table below sets forth the number of agencies by type that have participated in the Crime Reporting Program through December, 1997. The State Highway Patrol and the Wildlife Commission are each counted as one agency even though a monthly report is received reflecting activity in each county. Uniform Crime reports received from these agencies represent statistical data covering approximately 98.7 percent of the estimated North Carolina population.

January 1, 1997 - December 31, 1997

Month	Total	Police	Sheriff	State Parks	Campus Police	SHP	Wildlife	Percent of Pop. Cov.
January	476	332	95	28	20	1	1	98.76
February	474	330	95	28	20	1	1	98.71
March	474	330	95	28	20	1	1	98.71
April	474	331	95	28	19	1	1	98.70
May	474	330	96	28	19	1	1	98.78
June	473	328	96	28	19	1	1	98.73
July	474	329	96	28	19	1	1	98.77
August	474	328	96	28	20	1	1	98.76
September	475	329	96	28	20	1	1	98.77
October	474	328	96	28	20	1	1	98.76
November	473	327	96	28	20	1	1	98.75
December	473	327	96	28	20	1	1	98.75
Average	474	329	95	28	19	1	1	98.74

Crime Reporting Districts

